

Freedom

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NOTES.

Labour Party to Take Office.

The turn of the political wheel which brings the Labour Party to the Government benches is startling in its suddenness. A little over a year ago Mr. Lloyd George was calling them Bolsheviks; now he and his friends are helping them to turn out the Unionist Government and to step into their places. With only 192 members in a House of over 600, it is certain that they can do nothing very startling. At the annual conference of the Scottish division of the Independent Labour Party, Mr. Maxton, M.P., said "the first thing to do was to take from the rich and give to the poor the opportunity of living." It would be far better to stop the exploiters taking from the workers the wealth they produce. The *Labour Magazine*, issued officially by the Labour Party, warns the workers not to "expect miracles," and speaks of the party setting itself to deal "faithfully, wisely, and prudently" with the pressing problems of the day. It also hopes the miners "will not embarrass the first Labour Government by pressing untimely demands." When were the demands of the workers ever considered "timely"? Mr. Thomas Johnston, M.P., editor of *Forward*, says that a Labour Government should not accept the "excessive and ridiculous salaries paid to Cabinet Ministers." We do not know whether Mr. Johnston will have an opportunity to refuse for himself, but his suggestion has met with a chilly reception from the rest of the party. As there are about 60 offices to be filled from the 192 Labour Members, it is a delicate question. We do not expect miracles from a Labour Government, and know there is bitter disappointment in store for the many thousands of honest and sincere men and women in the Socialist movement who now see their dream of a workers' Government realised. But government was not instituted for the benefit of the people, but to protect class interests, and cannot function otherwise. A new privileged class may arise, but as long as Governments exist the mass of workers will get only bread and circuses.

The Red Light on the Railway.

The National Wages Board's award on the wages of railway workers has hit the locomotive men severely, and they are threatening to strike—at least, all the members of the Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, who have rejected the award by a large majority. Those who are members of the National Union of Railwaymen were not given an opportunity to express an opinion; their officials promptly accepted on their behalf. There certainly seems to be some trickery in the decision to cut these men's wages to the extent of as much as 22s. a week in some cases, whilst leaving the majority of other grades untouched. It looks as though the railway managers have taken advantage of the rivalry between the officials of the two Unions to play one section of the men off against the other, and thus defeat them in detail. It is the old game—divide and conquer. Trade Union officials run Unions as though they were their own private businesses, and only consult the members when it suits their own ends. Their individual salaries and expenses sometimes run from £1,000 to £2,000 a year, and they have forgotten what a reduction of £1 a week means to a wage-earner. The drivers and firemen are being pressed not to strike, on the ground that it would seriously inconvenience the new Labour Government. We hope they will take no notice of this advice. Let them tell the politicians to keep their intrigues for the House of Commons. If they will not help, they must not hinder. If nationalisation of the railways ever comes about, strikers will have a rough time at the hands of the Government, Labour or otherwise. We are curious to see what will happen if the present threatened strike should break out. We have a vivid recollection of how a Labour Government in Australia broke a railway strike some years ago.

Struggle for Free Speech in U.S.

After a long and persistent agitation, President Coolidge has released unconditionally the remaining thirty-one political prisoners sentenced under the Espionage Act for anti-war activities, many of the charges being based on perjury and manufactured evidence, verdicts of guilty being easily obtained during the war hysteria which ran through all sections of the community. Seven of the men released received sentences of imprisonment ranging from 5 to 20 years, in addition to fines of \$10,000 or \$20,000! Five years had to pass after the War had ended and the world "made safe for democracy" before these victims of bigotry and prejudice could leave their dungeons. War profiteers, German spies, and organisers of bomb plots—all these were released long ago; but there was no amnesty for these men, mostly members of the I.W.W. Even now many men are in prison in California solely for belonging to the I.W.W. If the red card of membership is found on a "Wobbly" he may get ten years—yes, ten years!—for "criminal syndicalism." This intolerance of freedom of expression is widespread in the "great Republic of the West," and is not confined to industrial agitators. Authors, actors, publishers, musicians, motion picture producers, and others have just formed a national council to fight the censorship. The chairman, Mr. George Creel, says: "It is the principle of censorship itself that we hope to crush, for the censoring of any one form of expression carries a threat of censorship for every other form of expression." Censorship, he says, stands condemned by reason of its "unfailing stupidity and inevitable futility." It creates evils far worse than those it assumes to correct, and is an attack upon liberty, "doubly dangerous because it is made in the name of morality." Many Americans are cursed with a craze for standardisation. They think that Dame Nature should turn out "100 per cent." Americans just as Henry Ford turns out "tin Lizzies." But, thank goodness, the dear dame loves variety too much to perpetrate such an atrocious joke as that.

Freedom in Education.

The annual conference of Educational Associations, held in London recently, was interesting in many ways, but the subject that interested us most was that of the freedom granted to scholars in a few private schools. It is really an extension of the Montessori system to elder children, who are allowed freedom of choice in the subjects they study, the teacher's work being to help them to follow up the particular line they have chosen. By this method the scholar eventually settles down to a course of study for which he is naturally fitted and into which he throws the whole of his energies. Of course, there are not many schools where this is possible, for the simple reason that there are not many parents who appreciate such methods. Most of them send their children to school to be "trained" for one of the professions, and the poor schoolmaster, whose livelihood depends on humouring the whims and fancies of those who pay the school fees, is everlastingly engaged in the task of trying to fit square pegs into round holes; whereas if the scholar was left alone to follow his own bent he would in the long run make much better progress than is possible under the cramming system, and be a greater credit to the school and the schoolmaster. Why limit this free environment to the school life of the children of well-to-do parents? If these methods have proved effective, why not adopt them in the schools of working-class children? Because the capitalists want a continuous supply of wage-slaves, and for that purpose these children must be drilled and disciplined from their earliest days in order that they may take kindly to the compulsion and machine-like movements of modern industry. But it is well to have it on record that, as Anarchists are always pointing out, freedom in education produces better and more lasting results than the old compulsory methods.

ON LEAVING RUSSIA.

Among other things, it has been stated in the American press that I was very happy to leave Russia, and that I preferred exile in Germany to freedom in Russia. This statement, attributed to me, is a deliberate lie!

It is true that the hypocrisy, intolerance, and treachery of the Bolsheviks arouse in me a feeling of indignation and revolt, but, as an Anarchist, I have no admiration nor defence for any Government of any land, and the statement that I prefer exile in Germany rather than freedom in Russia is ridiculous and false.

I made it very clear to the press correspondents with whom I spoke that, in spite of all the difficulties with which I had to put up in Russia, I was deeply grieved when I was forced to leave that country. This was not true when I left America. Although I have my entire family, good comrades, and many dear friends in the U.S.A., yet when I was deported from there by the capitalist Government my heart was light. It was not so in the case of Russia. Never have I felt so depressed as since I have been sentenced to exile from Russia. My love for that country and its people is too deep for me to rejoice that I am an exile, especially at a time when they are undergoing extreme suffering and most severe persecution. On the contrary, I would prefer to be there, and, together with the workers and peasants, search for a way to loosen the chains of Bolshevik tyranny.

I regard the Bolshevik Government as the worst foe of Russia. Its system of espionage is perhaps worse than anywhere else in the world. Espionage overshadows all thought, all creative effort and action. Despite tales to the contrary, told by foreign observers who have spent a few weeks or months on Russian soil under Bolshevik guides, and despite the statements of those who receive money from the Bolsheviks for their services, there is no freedom of opinion in Russia. No one is permitted to express an opinion unless it be in favour of the ruling class. Should a worker dare say anything at a meeting of his factory or Union which is not favourable to the Communists, he is sure to land in prison or be booked by the agents of the G.P.U. (the new name for the Tcheka) as a counter-revolutionist. Thousands of workers, students, men and women of high intellectual attainments, as well as undeveloped but intelligent peasants, are languishing to-day in Soviet prisons. The world is told they are "counter-revolutionists" and "bandits." Though they are the most idealistic and revolutionary flowers of Russia, they are charged with all sorts of false charges before the world, while their persecutors, the "Communists," who exploit and terrorise the people, call themselves revolutionaries and the saviours of the oppressed. Behind revolutionary phraseology they hide deeds which no other capitalist Government would be allowed to commit without a protest arising from the whole world.

On March 5, 1923, the Central Government Clothing Factory in Petrograd reduced the wages of its employees 30 per cent. without giving notice or making any explanation to any of them. When their wages were handed out each of the workers was under the impression that it was a clerical mistake, and the 1,200 employees went to the office simultaneously to ask why so much of their pay was missing. To this the factory director replied that the people ought to be satisfied with what they get and ought to thank them (the directors and the Government) for supplying them with work at all. Amazed at such an answer and boiling with indignation, they decided not to resume work until they got a satisfactory explanation. Union representatives were thereupon called, but those officials refused to come until the workers went back to their machines. The factory manager told them also that if they dared to strike all of them would be considered counter-revolutionists and dealt with accordingly. Immediately the workers called a meeting. While they were discussing their grievances the Union representatives entered. But instead of sympathising with the workers, one of these "defenders of labour" pounded on the table with his fist and called in a thundering voice: "I order you all back to work."

Naturally, such behaviour only aroused all present to the highest pitch of excitement. The order was bitterly resented and the meeting continued. An old working man got up and related the conditions under which he and his family were forced to live, and asked how on earth he could keep from starvation with the miserable wages he received. The description of his own life being the very mirror of the life they all lead, resulted in a most pitiful scene. Everybody suddenly burst into tears. Young and old, men and women, all were crying, and several in the audience fainted.

A few hours after this came several chiefs representing the G.P.U. and the Union, and, together with the head director of the Petrograd clothing factories, announced that the wages would be reduced only 18 per cent. instead of 30 per cent. The workers thereupon decided to resume work and quietude prevailed in the

factory. But at the end of the next week 120 workers, who were considered to be more outspoken and determined than the others, were discharged from the factory, thrown out of the Union, and put on the black list; that is, on their passports were written: "Citizen — discharged from the Central Government Clothing Factory for mutiny against the Workers' and Peasants' Government, with the purpose of taking over the factory."

Thus, because these proletarians of the "Communist" State protested against a reduction in their wages, they were thrown out of the Union, and consequently they can no longer obtain any work. What is still worse, they are registered by the G.P.U. as counter-revolutionists!

Now, let us take the case of the Skorokhad factory. In June, 1923, the Leather Makers' Union and the Communist Committee of the Skorokhad factory decided, without consulting the workers, that a clubhouse of the district should be repaired at the expense of the Skorokhad workers (about 3,000 in number). Each of the various departments were told that it must work eight hours' overtime to cover the expense of the club, and that "the other departments have already agreed to do so." All departments, without knowing about each other, indignantly refused on the following grounds:—

1. That the club is not a workers' but a Communist club; only Communist lectures are delivered there, and no others are permitted.
2. That even if they would agree in principle to working on behalf of the club, they resented the action of the Union officials and the "Communist" Committee in having decided for them, as if they were so many cattle, to do the work.

The workers demanded a meeting of the entire factory. This the Union and Shop Committee (which usually consists of Communists or Communist sympathisers) refused to grant. On that day no one worked overtime. The next day, when this refusal was repeated, the doors of the factory were locked, and the customary passes that permit the workers to leave the factory were not given out. About half the workers returned to work—the other half stood waiting until the two hours were up and the gates opened. Each evening of that week the same thing was repeated. The doors were locked and the passes not issued. Yet it was only under the threat of being discharged that the rest of the workers submitted. As usual, a week later those workers of the various departments who did not act like cattle, but who showed character and spirit, were discharged.

In the same month—June, 1923—the workers of the Putilov factory and shipyard went out on strike, demanding an increase in their wages and the discontinuance of the practice of deducting high taxation from their weekly pay. Out of the small wages that the workers receive in Russia, the Government orders—without consulting the workers, of course—a certain amount to be deducted for various purposes, such as the Red Army invalids, the Red Army, the Red Aeroplane Fleet, "Cultural" work, Union dues, and countless other things; because of these deductions, the workers sometimes get no more than half of their wages.

After a three days' strike of the Putilov workers, the wages were increased, but their second demand was refused; the employees nevertheless returned to work. However, as a result of this strike, about 400 workers were discharged, and 100 arrested. The most tragic part of all this is that the Union and the Shop Committees, of course under Communist management, participated in these discharges and arrests, in co-operation with the factory administration and the Government Political Department, for there is a law in Soviet Russia that no workers can be discharged without the consent of the Union and the Shop Committee. But the Government solves this problem by placing their own agents as officials in the Unions and the Shop Committees.

It happened that I was kept in the same prison where those 100 Putilov working men were detained. When asked why they were imprisoned, I received the answer: "They charge us with counter-revolution. God knows what they mean by it."

The above-mentioned facts concern only Petrograd; but there are thousands of similar cases all over present-day Russia, and yet the Bolsheviks are continually publishing stories about the glorious conditions and the freedom that the Russian proletarian enjoys! The proletarian, inarticulate, and living in the shadow of the G.P.U., cannot tell the truth to the world. Should he try it, or should he try even to defend his own rights, he will find himself listed as a counter-revolutionist or a bandit, liable to arrest at any moment.

No, I am *not* happy to be out of Russia. I would rather be there helping the workers combat the tyrannical deeds of the hypocritical Communists.

MOLLIE STEIMER.

Berlin, November, 1923.

EGOISM.

There is no word more generally misinterpreted than the word "egoism," in its modern sense. In the first place, it is supposed to mean devotion to self-interest, without regard to the interest of others. It is thus opposed to altruism—devotion to others and sacrifice of self. This interpretation is due to the use of the word thus antithetically by Herbert Spencer.

Again, it is identified with hedonism, or eudaemonism, or epicureanism, philosophies that teach that the attainment of pleasure, or happiness, or advantage, whichever you may choose to phrase it, is the true rule of life.

Modern egoism, as propounded by Stirner and Nietzsche, and expounded by Ibsen, Shaw, and others, is all these; but it is more. It is the realisation by the individual that he is an individual; that, as far as he is concerned, he is the *only* individual.

For each one of us stands alone in the midst of a universe. He is surrounded by sights and sounds which he interprets as exterior to himself, although all he knows of them are the impressions on his retina and ear drums and other organs of sense. The universe for him is measured by these sensations; they are, for him, the universe. Some of them he interprets as denoting other individuals, whom he conceives as more or less like himself. But none of these is himself. He stands apart. His consciousness, and the desires and gratifications that enter into it, is a thing unique; no other can enter into it.

However near and dear to you may be your wife, children, friends, they are not *you*; they are outside of you. You are forever alone. Your thoughts and emotions are yours alone. There is no other who experiences *your* thoughts or *your* feelings.

No doubt it gives you pleasure when others think as you do, and inform you of it through language; or when others enjoy the same things that you do. Moreover, quite apart from their enjoying the same things that you enjoy, it gives you pleasure to see them enjoy themselves in any way. Such gratification to the individual is the pleasure of sympathy, one of the most acute pleasures possible for most people.

According to your sympathy, you will take pleasure in your own happiness or in the happiness of other people; but it is always your own happiness you seek. The most profound egoist may be the most complete altruist; but he knows that his altruism is, at the bottom, nothing but self-indulgence.

But egoism is more than this. It is the realisation by the individual that he is above all institutions and all formulas; that they exist only so far as he chooses to make them his own by accepting them.

When you see clearly that *you* are the measure of the universe, that everything that exists exists for *you* only so far as it is reflected in your own consciousness, you become a new man; you see everything by a new light; you stand on a height and feel the fresh air blowing on your face, and find new strength and glory in it.

Whatever gods you worship, you realise that they are *your* gods, the product of your own mind, terrible or amiable, as you may choose to depict them. You hold them in your hand, and play with them, as a child with its paper dolls; for you have learned not to fear them, that they are but the "imagination of your heart."

All the ideals which men generally think are realities, you have learned to see through; you have learned that they are *your* ideals. Whether you have originated them, which is unlikely, or have accepted somebody else's ideals, makes no difference. They are *your* ideals just so far as *you* accept them. The priest is reverend only so far as *you* reverence him. If you cease to reverence him, he is no longer reverend for *you*. You have power to make and unmake priests as easily as you can make and unmake gods. You are the one of whom the poet tells, who stands unmoved, though the universe fall in fragments about you.

And all the other ideals by which men are moved, to which men are enslaved, for which men afflict themselves, have no power over you; you are no longer afraid of them, for you know them to be your *own* ideals, made in your own mind, for your own pleasure, to be changed or ignored, just as you choose to change or ignore them. They are your own little pets, to be played with, not to be feared.

"The State" or "The Government" is idealised by the many as a thing above them, to be revered and feared. They call it "My Country," and if you utter the magic words, they will rush to kill their friends, whom they would not injure by so much as a pin scratch, if they were not intoxicated and blinded by their ideal. Most men are deprived of their reason

under the influence of their ideals. Moved by the ideal of "religion" or "morality," they fly at each others' throats—they, who are otherwise often the gentlest of men! But their ideals are for them like the "fixed ideas" of lunatics. They become irrational and irresponsible under the influence of their ideals. They will not only destroy others, but they will quite sink their own interests, and rush madly to destroy themselves as a sacrifice to the all-devouring ideal. Curious, is it not, to one who looks on with a philosophical mind?

But the egoist has no ideals, for the knowledge that his ideals are only *his* ideals frees him from their domination. He acts for his own interest, not for the interest of ideals. He will neither hang a man nor whip a child in the interest of "morality," if it is disagreeable to him to do so.

He has no reverence for "The State." He knows that "The Government" is but a set of men, mostly as big fools as he is himself, many of them bigger. If the State does things that benefit him, he will support it; if it attacks him and encroaches on his liberty, he will evade it by any means in his power, if he is not strong enough to withstand it. He is a man without a country.

"The Flag," that most men adore, as men always adore symbols, worshipping the symbol more than the principle it is supposed to set forth, is for the egoist but a rather inharmonious piece of patchwork; and anybody may walk on it or spit on it if they will, without exciting his emotion any more than if it were a tarpaulin that they walked upon or spat upon. The principles that it symbolises he will maintain as far as it seems to his advantage to maintain them; but if the principles require him to kill people or be killed himself, you will have to demonstrate to him just what benefit he will gain by killing or being killed before you can persuade him to uphold them.

When the judge enters court in his togger (judges and ministers and professors know the value of togger in impressing the populace) the egoist is unterrified. He has not even any respect for "The Law." If the law happens to be to his advantage, he will avail himself of it; if it invades his liberty, he will transgress it as far as he thinks it wise to do so. But he has no regard for it as a thing supernal. It is to him the clumsy creation of them who still "sit in darkness."

Nor does he bow the knee to Morality—Sacred Morality! Some of its precepts he may accept, if he chooses to do so; but you cannot scare him off by telling him it is not "right." He usually prefers not to kill or steal; but if he must kill or steal to save himself, he will do it with a good heart, and without any qualms of "conscience." And "morality" will never persuade him to injure others when it is of no advantage to himself. He will not be found among a band of "white caps," flogging and burning poor devils, because their actions do not conform to the dictates of "morality," though they have injured none by such actions; nor will he have any hand in persecuting helpless girls, and throwing them out into the street, when he has received no ill at their hands.

To his friends—to those who deserve the truth from him—he will tell the truth; but you cannot force the truth from him because he is "afraid to tell a lie." He has no fear, not even of perjury, for he knows that oaths are but devices to enslave the mind by an appeal to supernatural fears.

And for all the other small, tenuous ideals, with which we have fettered our minds and to which we have shrunk our petty lives, they are for the egoist as though they were not.

"Filial love and respect" he will give to his parents if they have earned it by deserving it. If they have beaten him in infancy, and scorned him in childhood, and domineered over him in maturity, he may possibly love them in spite of maltreatment; but if they have alienated his affection, they will not reawaken it by an appeal to "duty."

In brief, egoism, in its modern interpretation, is the antithesis, not of altruism, but of idealism. The ordinary man—the idealist—subordinates his interests to the interests of his ideals, and usually suffers for it. The egoist is fooled by no ideals; he discards them or uses them, as may suit his own interest. If he likes to be altruistic, he will sacrifice himself for others; but only because he likes to do so; he demands no gratitude nor glory in return.

JOHN BEVERLEY ROBINSON.

A lucky instinct seems to say to the people, I am at war with all those who govern me, even with those whom I myself have just elected.—*Chamfort*.

ANARCHISM VERSUS SOCIALISM.

By WM. C. OWEN.

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A Labour Government.

It is now certain that within a week or two a Labour Government will be in office in this country, the Liberals having decided to vote with Labour and turn out the Unionist Government. The Labour members are jubilant at the prospect of showing that they are "fit to govern," and the workers are hopeful that the new Government will break the chains fastened on them by monopoly and special privilege. On the other hand, many timid folk are in a mild panic, fearing that the dividends on which they live may be taken from them by the wicked Socialists. We think that both the workers and the dividend-hunters are labouring under a delusion. Leaders of the Labour Party are saying that the workers must not expect miracles, and shareholders are told that there will be no expropriations. Besides, the two capitalist parties in the House can outvote the Labour Party by more than two to one, which will effectually prevent them doing anything very drastic during their first term of office.

At the Labour Party demonstration held at the Albert Hall on January 8th Mr. Ramsay MacDonald outlined the tasks they would first take up, and said "the first great duty we put our hands to is to establish peace." They would do their best to complete the structure of the League of Nations, and they would recognise the Russian Government. "I want trade; I want negotiations. I want a settlement from the coasts of Japan to the coasts of Ireland." Well, previous Governments have been seeking the same ends without success; but wanting and getting are two very different things. The French Government and the French army are pretty stiff obstacles even for a MacDonald.

In dealing with unemployment, he said that the root of it is in the lower purchasing power of the mass of consumers in this land. But not a word about its relation to land monopoly. And in dealing with the housing question there was the same omission. "I want a crusade that will give us houses, houses, houses all the time until we have enough houses to put the people in." Then came the only strong note in the whole speech. "If we find that trusts, monopolies, corners in any of the essential materials for building are standing in our way we shall break them." The one great monopoly that always stands in the way is land monopoly. You cannot get sites for houses without running up against this the greatest and most powerful of all monopolies; and bricks, iron, sand, slates, timber, all these are in the grip of the land monopolists. The unemployed could colonise the idle land in this country and easily produce almost everything they require if it were not for the fences that bar them from the soil, one of the most fertile soils in the world.

The Labour Party's attitude on the land question will be the "acid test" as to how far they will go in striking at the root of wage-slavery and the other social evils that spring out of it. Half the soil of the United Kingdom is owned by about 2,500 individuals, who compel those who live and work on the land to pay millions to them yearly for permission to do so; and who also have the legal right, frequently exercised, to refuse their permission to anyone. Just imagine 40,000,000 otherwise sensible, practical folk tolerating such a ridiculous situation. A man stands guarding many thousands of acres of land and says: "I forbid you to cultivate this land, or build houses on it, or make roads through it. And I can call on all the forces of the State to help me." Where does he get this right? From a piece of parchment which says that all these acres were given to one of his ancestors hundreds of years ago by a drunken and dissolute monarch, perhaps as a reward for marrying one of the king's mistresses. Now we can understand capitalist Governments being unwilling to interfere with this monopoly, because the thieves know that if they do not hang together they may hang separately. But for the leader of the Labour Party—the party which claims to represent the workers by hand and brain—to outline the policy of the party without mentioning this unspeakably monstrous evil shows such a lack of courage on his

part, or that of his supporters, that one may say confidently that the robbers have nothing to fear and the workers nothing to hope for.

We believe that a bold and resolute attack on the ranks of Monopoly and Special Privilege would rouse the people as they have never been roused before. Whilst a million and a half unemployed and their dependents are living in a state of semi-starvation the rich and powerful are flaunting their wealth in the West End of London and other pleasure haunts of their class, and they show the same contempt for the masses as the wealthy seigneurs of France showed just prior to the great French Revolution. In such a moment as this, instead of fierce, hot blows at the source of all our misery, we have Mr. MacDonald talking about the "risks on every side" of them. Does he think that the battle for the emancipation of the workers can be fought to a finish without casualties? Is this the great leader of the great party whose posters during the election gave us visions of the new world the workers were marching forward to? They may provide better houses, better food, and better education for the workers; but unless the evils of wage-slavery and monopoly are wiped out the only result of their policy will be the provision of more profitable slaves for Capitalism. "One step enough for me," said Mr. MacDonald. His first step will certainly not cause any of the great capitalists and monopolists to sleep uneasily to-night. The workers are once again being led in the wrong direction by leaders who seem more concerned with the pleasures and privileges of office than with the removal of the barriers to freedom and equality. It proves the futility of looking to others to fight battles which we ought to fight ourselves.

GERMAINE BERTON ACQUITTED.

More than a year ago Germaine Berton shot and killed Marius Plateau, in the office of *L'Action Française*, Paris. On December 24 last a French jury acquitted her. It is an event of far more than ordinary significance, for it raises issues which Civilisation, at present sinking steadily into the abyss of violence, will be compelled to face. As every Frenchman understands, the verdict was a condemnation of Fascism and that return to Royalism which it was the special mission of *L'Action Française* to preach, by word and deed. In that most sinister of movements, which seeks to resurrect, at any cost, the rule of Bourbonism, Leon Daudet is the acknowledged leader. His life it was that Germaine Berton sought. In his absence, which he himself had cautiously contrived, she killed Plateau, as his right-hand man.

France is at this moment under the military yoke, and all the forces of the Government, backed by a Militarism whose secret sympathies are Royalist, worked hard for a conviction. To us their failure seems extraordinary, for they had in their favour—everything. The jury was composed of elderly men, drawn from professional and business ranks. The prisoner was an avowed Anarchist, and the Anarchist daily, *Le Libertaire*, laboured indefatigably on her behalf. Every ignorant prejudice, and all those social cowardices which range themselves instinctively with power, clamoured for this young girl's blood. Nevertheless she was acquitted.

We Anarchists loathe murder. Our whole movement is one undying protest against the systematic slaughter of our weaker fellow-beings. We hate the coercive machinery of Government precisely because it reduces the masses to impotence and then drives them, in their helplessness, down to death. We eye with habitual suspicion all resorts to violence, because we know that such policies pave the way for those Dictatorships which, being the very quintessence of coercion, are the type of Government we detest the most. How could it be otherwise? We ourselves, as the avowed enemies of compulsion, are always the first victims of their reprisals.

Plateau, like his master, Leon Daudet, was plotting violence on the grandest scale. Fascism, which is the incarnation of Militarism in its most brutal form, is sweeping through Europe; as, under other aliases, it is sweeping through the United States. It means the annihilation of all that may make this civilisation worth preserving, and we regard it as being the most dangerous legacy the War has left. Everywhere it has wrecked, and burned, and tortured, and assassinated remorselessly. Over pyramids of corpses it has climbed to power, and almost invariably the corpses have been those of men and women who were striving for a better social order; who were working for some approach to justice; whose lives were lives of useful toil, and their aspirations the one spot of brightness in a steadily gathering gloom. Against all this nobler element Plateau and *L'Action Française* waged relentless war. Their

appeal was always to the sword. If inciting to kill is equivalent to murder, how are you to classify these Fascist leaders?

Some years ago five Anarchists were hanged in Chicago because an exploding bomb had killed a policeman. The prosecution admitted that nobody knew who threw the bomb, but urged that the accused should be executed because their speeches and writings had incited to the throwing. Accordingly they were put to death as having been guilty of "constructive murder." Where would such a man as Mussolini be standing now if such a doctrine were applied to him? In reality, of course, he would laugh at the very thought, and retort scornfully, with Bismarck, that there is no making an omelette without breaking eggs.

At the Chicago trial, Spies, one of the accused, stated frankly that, had he thrown the bomb, he would have admitted it without a moment's hesitation; his argument being that 200 policemen, with revolvers drawn, were charging on an innocent and helpless meeting; that on the day previous they had shot down a number of unarmed men and women; that defence in such circumstances is always justified, and often minimises the threatened slaughter. To us the argument has always seemed entirely valid; and, admirers of Tolstoy as we are, never have we been able to accept the philosophy of non-resistance. Passive resistance we can understand, although we regard its effectiveness as over-rated; but non-resistance appears to us a denial of everything we know concerning Life. All living things, from the lowest form of vegetable to Man himself, hold their existence on the term of struggling to their utmost against aggression. If they lack the necessary courage and energy, they succumb and are supplanted by bolder and more vigorous growths.

These are the questions Germaine Berton's acquittal pushes into the foreground, and they are perhaps the most important and difficult questions the Labour and Revolutionary movement has to face. Throughout the civilised world the right to life, and freedom in life, is being trampled under foot by aggressors armed with all the powers of modern science, and these aggressors are utterly oblivious to human rights. By cornering the earth's natural resources they have reduced the masses to an economic helplessness hitherto unknown. They have made life dependent on such employment as they may choose to furnish, and they give or withhold employment at their own arbitrary will. What is this but aggression on the grandest and most deadly scale; and are not we Anarchists entirely right in maintaining that it must be combated unflinchingly, and overthrown at any cost?

Are we not also right in our assertion that at the head of these aggressors stand our modern Governments, and that it makes little difference how these Governments are labelled? One and all they are machines, constructed for the express purpose of compelling their subjects to submit. By armed force they collect whatever taxes they see fit to levy; secure obedience to whatever laws they choose to pass; dictate, down to the minutest detail, the conduct of their subjects' lives; and finally, whenever their own interests demand it, drive those subjects to slaughter on the field of battle. If this is not tyranny, we do not know what is; and against that tyranny we Anarchists array ourselves, as best we can. Is not that understandable? Yet practically all the Labour leaders, and more particularly the Social Democrats, insist that we are demented dreamers, and that there is no telling what we really want.

If these leaders cannot understand, Governments, and the monopolists whom Governments support in their aggressions, are not so stupid. Habitually they look on us as outlaws, but it is at the hands of the Dictatorships—more especially those of Russia, Italy and Spain—that our sufferings have been beyond endurance. These charlatans have stuck at nothing. They have bombarded and reduced to ashes our assembly halls and libraries, as also those of any working-man's society that dared to question their authority. They have shot us down in our own homes, clubbed us to death on public streets, thrown us by hundreds into their prisons, and tortured us with fiendish ingenuity. It is to be supposed that a future and more humane society will rub its eyes with amazement when it reads, as surely it will read, this tale of blood. As yet, however, we Anarchists are almost the only ones who know it; but we know it well.

After all, the universe itself is just; and, by an entirely righteous logic, out of violence violence grows. We ourselves do not strike aggressively, but neither do we turn the other cheek when smitten. We resist aggression, as a necessity for self-preservation; and we recognise that Germaine Berton threw herself across the path of one of the most dangerously aggressive forces now invading modern life. From this standpoint the Anarchist press throughout the world with one accord has rejoiced over her acquittal. We believe FREEDOM's readers also will rejoice.

WHAT! NOT CONSTRUCTIVE?

An old subscriber, who at one time pleaded in our columns for the philosophy of non-resistance, writes discontinuing the paper. He gives as his reasons that we are not "constructive"; that we "seem to have no policy, plan or path"; that a "free from Government idea" is merely a negation, and that what is needed is "a vision of the Infinite and strong life, emerging in the reason, love and freedom of men." He wants a clear application of all this to social relationship, by means of birth-control, the sharing of wealth, and the refusing to kill our fellow-men. Thence will issue, in his judgment, "a new order by a pacifist, cheerful revolution, which Parliament can never produce." In conclusion, he expresses his longing for an organ "on these deep and constructive lines," and he invites us to change our name from "Freedom" to "Freedom and Fellowship."

We Anarchists welcome criticism, and it is our established habit to apply it freely to ourselves; for we regard criticism as the hammer by which clear thought is beaten out. We consider we are living in a world that reeks with lies, and we hold that the first and most necessary task is to free ourselves from the jungle of illusion. Accordingly I criticise this letter.

As I see it, the doctrine of non-resistance is false; alike in the spiritual, intellectual, and physical domains. Error has to be fought, and through the struggle we draw nearer to truth. Aggressive injustice has to be combated, in order that some closer approximation to justice may take its place. All struggle implies the destruction of the inferior, to make way for the superior. Until cannibalism, serfdom, and chattel slavery had been destroyed, they themselves rendered the birth of higher forms of social life impossible. How are you to have a system of "sharing wealth," and of the mutual aid for which our correspondent longs, until you destroy the monopolies to-day existing? How are you to get at the land, which is the source of all wealth, without tearing down the fences Monopoly has placed around it?

Non-resistance is, to me, a religious illusion of the most pernicious type. It came to us from the East, where it threw the masses into a stupor of submission which has lasted for centuries and has begotten immeasurable woes and degradations. Life teaches, with unwearying patience, that, if we wish to survive, we must resist invasion; that we must exercise the virile virtue of courage; that we are not to "take it lying down." Submission to the unjust is always weakness, and the whole process of evolution is from less to greater strength. Can you conceive a world constructed on the principle of weakness?

It is most calumnious—though doubtless unintentionally so—to assert that we Anarchists are non-constructive. We stand for Freedom precisely because we are convinced that it is Life's constructive principle; that only when human energies and human abilities are given unshackled play will it be possible to have a co-operation worthy of the name. This cannot be achieved until we have struggled out of the straightjacket in which Monopoly now pins us, and on no account will we assist the State in its task of tightening the strings.

Ours is an anti-slavery crusade; and we see clearly that slavery must be destroyed before the constructive work of emancipation can begin. The chain must be struck off; the prison doors thrown open; the fence pulled down; the man now riding on the people's backs unseated. Then it will be possible for Labour to stand erect; no longer crouching in helplessness, as it is at present, but master of itself and lord of its own life.

Such a programme is at once destructive and constructive; and we say that it is sound because it is true to Life. Life and Death are inseparable parts of one great process whereby what has become worn-out and useless is destroyed, to make way for a more vigorous and higher type. We Anarchists are of the opinion that Slavery has had its day, and that it must now give place to Freedom, as being a higher and more constructive system demanded by the larger spiritual and material needs which Life's evolutionary forces have developed. The ancient garment cannot stretch itself to the stature we have attained. It is bursting at a thousand parts. It has to go.

We admit frankly that the masses do not understand, as yet, the philosophy we preach. The greater need for preaching it simply, intelligibly, straight; and the more so because our morality and economics are of a simplicity that all can understand. We say: "Away with hypocrisy and lies! If you talk human brotherhood, mean it; and prove that you mean it by joining hands with us in the struggle to establish the only condition under which human brotherhood can become a living truth. Understand that Life, in itself, is inexhaustibly rich and immeasurably fine; but only in Freedom. Abolish special privilege, whose other name is robbery—always an enslaving and

Push the sale of "Freedom."

corrupting force. Throw open the gates of equal opportunity to every child of man."

I say that such a programme is nobly constructive and profoundly practical. I maintain that Shelley saw into the heart of things when he closed his "Prometheus Unbound" with the words:—

"This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be

Great, good and joyous; beautiful and free.

This is alone Life, Power, Empire, and Victory."

WM. C. OWEN.

COMMUNIST INTRIGUES IN GERMANY.

The following extracts are taken from the "News Service" issued by the International Working Men's Association, of Berlin, dated November 7:—

"After the Government suspended passive resistance, the Communists exerted themselves to the utmost to prove that they alone are the true defenders of the German 'Fatherland.' They lost no time in declaring that the giving up of passive resistance was 'treason to the German people.' In this regard the Communists are in entire accord with the Nationalists, the 'Deutsch-volkisch' (reactionary) and the Fascists, all of whom declare in favour of the continuation of the policy of passive resistance.

"It has become quite apparent that the Communist Party of Germany is inspired by nationalistic tendencies and that it is sacrificing the interests of the working class to those of the 'Fatherland.' We quote from the 'plan of work' of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany:

"(a) Establishing direct connections. In reference to (a), for the present to try to get in touch with higher (military) officers that are known for their nationalistic sentiments but who do not belong to the Fascist organisations. This with men such as Lettow-Vorbeck (notorious murderer of workers in Hamburg) who recently refused to participate in the 'inner front' struggle against the Communists on the ground of the nationalistic tendency of the German Communist Party. The purpose of the negotiations with such men should concern the possibility of a joint political programme. In this connection, the difference of opinion due to the theoretic views of our party should be ignored as much as possible, while mutually accepting points emphasised. The tone of such conferences to be most courteous (using 'Excellency,' etc., in addressing) and amiable. No Marxist quotations to be employed. On the whole, behaviour should be as little as possible Party-programme-like."

"(b) Indirect connection through propaganda. This refers less to important persons than to the entire mass of officers. Not to be connected with the propaganda already accomplished among the soldiers, which has an entirely different significance and purpose. . . . In this connection, besides political means also those of personal influence are to be employed. Thus, promises of high military position and honours for the future, and in general exploit ambition, but not clumsily."

"When this 'plan of work' was published in the press of Germany, the central organ of the Communist Party of Germany, *Rote Fahne*, could offer but the following lame explanation:

"We Communists state frankly and freely to the whole working class of Germany: We will do everything to win those officers and those petty bourgeois elements . . . to the side of the proletariat and thus save Germany. . . . We Communists say to these officers: All those honest elements among you who want to free Germany from French militarism must fight on the side of the proletariat. The Russian Soviet power has won hundreds of former Tsarist officers for the cause of the workers who faithfully are serving the interests of the Russian proletariat."

"The whole attitude of the Communists proves that they are on the side of those who are fighting for the liberation of Germany for 'national freedom,' but that they have deserted and betrayed those who strive for emancipation from capitalism, from the State and oppression. The Communists are a State-supporting party. If they have so far not succeeded in winning over the elements of the former Prussian militarism it is surely not their fault."

CASH RECEIVED (not otherwise acknowledged).

(December 8 to January 12.)

"FREEDOM" SUBSCRIPTIONS.—K. M., A. J. R., L. Kisliuk, S. Zigmund, K. H., F. Large, B. Black, J. Buchie, C. A. G., J. Petrovich, A. J. R. H. H., A. Bishop, A. T., J. Ishill, A. Smith, A. Hazeland, H. Holt, A. Fiaminghi, G. D., H. Briner, A. G. Barker, D. Ballard, G. Wickel, W. Ms., W. Lagsding.

RUSSIAN PRISONERS FUND.—J. S. R. 2s. 6d., A. T. 5s.

Osugi's Murderer Sentenced.

On December 9, Captain Amakasu, gendarmerie officer, was found guilty of strangling to death our Japanese comrade Sakaye Osugi, his wife, and nephew, and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. It is very doubtful whether he will serve the sentence, but the Government had to put him on trial owing to the public indignation evoked by the murders.

Our comrade was pursued by his enemies even after death. On December 16, whilst comrades and friends were gathering for the funeral, three men called and said they wished to pay tribute to the dead. One of them was admitted to the room where the urns containing the ashes were standing. Pretending to go on his knees, he suddenly picked up the three urns and dashed into the street, where he handed them to the other two men, who drove off in a motor car. The robber was captured by the police, but the urns have not been found. In spite of the loss of their ashes, a funeral service was held at the Yanaka cemetery, photographs of the three being put in the place of honour instead of the ashes.

Death of John Beverley Robinson.

Our American comrade John Beverley Robinson died suddenly of heart disease, on November 12, at his home in St. Louis. He had been a persistent propagandist since the '80's, and although seventy years of age he was as keen as ever. He was a staunch admirer of Proudhon, and in his "Economics of Liberty" he gave a statement of the Frenchman's system of social organisation. A few years ago he translated Proudhon's "General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century," and, failing to find a publisher in the States, he arranged that we should publish it, and provided the greater part of the money for printing the book. We sent him an early copy a few weeks before his death, and he wrote us saying how pleased he was with its appearance, and was planning an advertising campaign for it. On another page we print an article on "Egoism," which he wrote for *Reedy's Mirror* some years ago. He was well known as an architect, and for several years was head of the school of architecture at Washington University.

"Freedom" Guarantee Fund.

The fund has started the year well and we hope it will continue to be liberally supported, as we have printers' and other bills sadly in arrear. The following sums have been received since our last issue:—T. S. 5s., C. Blandy 2s., A. J. R. 5s., H. G. Russell 10s., J. S. R. 2s. 6d., B. Black 2s. 6d., L. Newman and E. Richmond 5s., A. T. (Halesowen) 12s. 6d., D. £5, A. Smith 2s. 6d., G. Davison £5, Elizabeth £1 2s. 6d., D. Ballard 2s. 6d., J. Labadie 4s. 6d., G. P. 4s., Gateshead Group 15s., A. D. Moore 2s., L. G. Wolfe £1.

For the Aid of Anarchists in Russian Prisons.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 1923.

RECEIPTS.

Balance on hand (as per Report of December, 1922): 196 dols.; 25 Bulgarian leva; 362,500 Austrian kronen.
London Anarchist Group, per Sabel: £11; 1 dol. 44c. (£6 sent for Joint Committee was turned over to them.)
P. Ramus (Austria): 492,000 Austrian kronen; 29,000 German mks. (equal 1 dol.).
Tcherk., per A. Sh.: 10s. Geneva Group, per Altyzer: 100 Swiss francs.
Paris Comrades, per M. Roux: 200 French francs.
Group La Vero, Lisbon, Portugal: 5,600 German marks (equal then to 10 cents; turned over to the *Syndicalist*).
Anarchist Red Cross, New York: 50 dols.
Geneva Comrades, per Tuffman: Cheque, 100 Swiss francs (exchange 18 dols.).
Golos Truzhenika, New York: 25 dols. P. Ramus, Austria: 1 dol. 50c.
Italian Group Volonta, San Francisco: 80 dols. (for the American Express money order sent last year but not collected).
London Group, per Sabel and A. Sh.: 150 Italian lire.
Anarchist Red Cross, New York, per Weitzman: 75 dols.
Totals—447 dols. 94c. £11 10s. 25 leva. 854,500 Austrian kronen.
100 Swiss francs. 200 French francs. 150 Italian lire.

DISBURSEMENTS.

Per A. S., for food package for prisoners: 10 dols.
Forwarded to Moscow per Prof. H.: 100 dols.; £2.
" " Per Friend (April): 50 dols.; £5; 200 French francs.
" " Per Friend (September): 90 dols.; £2.
" " Per L. S.: 50 dols.
To N. Makhno, per Wolin: £4; 5 dols.
On account of Bulletin No. 1 and 2: 3 dols.
Per Friend, to Moscow (November): 54 dols.
Total disbursed: 362 dols.; £13; 200 French francs.
Balance on hand, January 1, 1924—79 dols. 19c.; 25 leva; 854,500 Austrian kronen; 100 Swiss francs; 150 Italian lire.

Fraternally,

ALEXANDER BERKMAN.

NOTE.—In view of the existence now of a Joint Committee to aid all Left Revolutionists in the prisons of Russia, all general contributions will hereafter be turned over to the Joint Committee. Those wishing their contributions to go exclusively to the Anarchists imprisoned in Russia will have their wishes complied with. All contributions should be sent to Fritz Kater, Kopernikusstr. 25 II., Berlin O 34, Germany.

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